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Transforming CSDP? Feminist triangles and gender regimes

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Abstract

Despite equality being considered one of the key normative foundations of the EU, gender has not yet been mainstreamed within the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). This article investigates the impact of institutional structures on the inclusion of a gender dimension in this policy area. The article adopts Woodward's (2003) model of feminist triangles to unpack the role of actors and processes; specifically, highlighting key innovations and missed opportunities to integrate gender into CSDP. Focusing in particular on femocrats, the article argues that for gender mainstreaming to take place, the office of the Gender Advisor needs to bridge the division between the military and civilian dimension of CSDP. It concludes that CSDP remains largely gender blind in spite of the EU's adoption of an action plan for the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.

Introduction

The EU is widely recognised as a catalyst for the development of equal rights policies across Europe. The privileged position of equality, as a foundational norm of European integration, is a narrative often deployed by officials and institutions to demonstrate the EU's commitment to human rights and fundamental freedoms (MacRae, 2010). Yet, the EU also has a rather uneven record when it comes to mainstreaming gender beyond employment and social affairs. When considering specifically the external dimension, it is clear that this particular perspective has

been lacking or altogether absent. Indeed, NATO has made more significant progress in integrating gender in security and defence than the EU (Wright, 2016; Guerrina and Wright, 2016). This article sets out to uncover the obstacles to the effective integration of gender sensitive approach into a policy area, the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), which is traditionally seen as gender neutral/free.

Gender scholars have produced detailed analyses of the European gender *acquis* and the impact of the EU as a gender actor. Most agree that equality between men and women is one of the most widely developed areas of European social and employment policy (Kantola, 2010; Bego, 2015; MacRae, 2010). However, these are policy areas traditionally seen as “gender mainstreaming friendly” as they seek to address structural obstacles to women’s participation in the labour market. Security and defence, on the other hand, have remained largely blind to the gendered nature of external affairs, diplomacy, development and military operations (Kronsell, 2012; 2015). At a time when the EU is seeking to re-establish its position as an international actor, understanding the role of institutional structures, processes and actors in opening a space for mainstreaming gender in this area becomes all the more important.

In essence, this article seeks to explore the way that “gender” has been included in a primarily intergovernmental area vis-à-vis communitarised areas. CSDP adheres to a different set of decision-making and policy-making mechanisms. It is our contention that it is this (presumed) distinctiveness that helped to marginalise and silence the gendered nature of institutional structure and policy outcomes. The mechanisms which supported gender mainstreaming in the internal communitarised sphere do not apply in the same way to the intergovernmental realm of CSDP. Rather, the primacy of member state considerations leads to geopolitical concerns taking primacy, contributing to the further marginalisation of the gender mainstreaming. The ability of key actors to affect change and mainstream gender is thus curtailed by the “special status” attributed to security and defence by policy-makers and

scholars alike. The article starts with one overarching research question: What are the opportunities and constraints for feminist actors to promote gender mainstreaming in the context of CSDP? We therefore explore the question of (feminist) agency, looking at where “critical” actors are located within CSDP and their ability to affect change. Considering the critical role of feminist actors in integrating gender into a policy area, we use the idea of feminist constellations to develop a map of key actors operating within CSDP.

As the article outlines, small steps have been taken to include gender within CSDP, not least in terms of personnel and the adoption of a regional action plan on UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325. Meanwhile, despite efforts by civil society to engage with institutional actors, they remain marginal to the process. We draw upon both primary and secondary sources to examine the gendered nature of CSDP. Although much of the information can be found in open sources, closed sources offer necessary additional insights in a policy area which comes with a layer of secrecy. Five interviews were conducted with EU Officials in 2015. These include officials based in Member State Permanent Representations to the EU and the EEAS. The interviews were confidential; therefore, no distinction is made between individuals employed directly by the EU or by member states.

Feminist Triangles in EU policy making: actors and processes for including gender in mainstream policies.

Feminist institutionalism is a useful framework for the analysis of policy areas that are traditionally portrayed as “gender neutral”, as it provides important insights into the role of actors, culture and structures in shaping key policies (Gains and Lowndes, 2014: 525). Additionally, institutions reflect wider social hierarchies and actively reproduce gender norms in the way they include, or exclude, gender from the policy process. As Mackay, Kenny and

Chappell (2010: 582) explain, the institutionalization, or formalization, of these norms ultimately contribute to the construction of gender regimes, thus how power is structured and normalized. As such, they help us to identify and understand the persistence of gender silences in key areas.

The focus of feminist institutionalism is wide reaching, including both formal and informal institutions, as well as women's policy agencies. Taken together this body of knowledge maps the way gender is included/excluded and defined/constructed in the context of formal policy making processes. State structures and highly institutionalised policy communities and organisations, e.g. the EU, are the main focus of analysis, providing useful opportunities for comparison between a range of structures, norms and actors (Gains & Lowndes, 2014; Lombardo & Verloo, 2009; Woodward, 2003). Feminist institutionalisms' engagement with security institutions has been limited and piecemeal. Yet, these are deeply gendered areas (Kronsell, 2012; 2015; Wright, 2016; Stern and Wibben, 2014). Understanding how gender is included in policy spheres that are traditionally seen as gender neutral provides important insights into pathways for the inclusion of traditionally marginal "interests" and the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming outside of social and economic policies.

Feminist institutionalism calls for a detailed analysis of social practices and structural hierarchies that contribute to embed gender norms in the very fabric of public policies. Feminist institutionalism seeks to understand the interactions between different (gender/ed) actors, as well as structure and agency. As Mackay, Kenny and Chappell (2010: 583) sum up, gendered subjects (i.e. actors) operate within gendered institutions (i.e. policy structures and bureaucracies) that are in turn influenced by "gendered institutional architects" (i.e. founders' vision). Moreover, these different actors and structures operate in a fluid and dynamic environment that reflects institutional inertia and values, and individual agency and self-

interest. Change is therefore constantly mediated between these multitude of actors (Mackay, Kenny and Chappell, 2010: 583).

Institutional inertia and path-dependency feature prominently in this analysis, as they provide a useful explanation of the institutional reluctance for change. Our focus here is on the formal institutional processes and critical actors. Whilst the interaction between informal and formal institutions, or the ‘rules-in-form’ and ‘rules-in-use’ (Leach and Lowndes, 2007) are also important, this analysis is beyond the scope of this article. Looking specifically at actors, Kenny (2007: 92-3) argues that they seek opportunities for exercising agency and affecting institutional change. For Kenny (2007: 93) there is a significant difference between ‘institutional layering, in which certain elements of an institutional area are partially renegotiated while leaving other existing elements in place, and institutional conversion, in which existing institutions are redirected to fulfil new purposes’. Institutions are therefore “living political beings” that are based on coalitions and alliances (Kenny, 2007: 93). Seemingly neutral processes are embedded with hidden values that privilege certain groups over others (Kenny and Mackay, 2009: 275). This framework helps us to understand how values and norms enter the policy process and the role of policy actors in socialising the institutions they are part of in accepting new norms. However, the new norms can also come up against established values and processes that leads to failure in normative innovation, thus exposing the gendered nature of institutions. This is exactly the case for gender mainstreaming in the area of security and defence.

Systems of multilevel governance, such as the EU, pose a particular challenge for feminist institutionalist approaches. The level of institutional complexity and bargaining has effectively created parallel, and occasionally competing, approaches to mainstreaming. The application of an institutionalist framework needs to be sensitive to the governance structure of each policy area, including institutional competencies and historical idiosyncrasies. The

EU's institutional matrix allows for the diffusion of norms, whilst reinterpreting those same norms through institutional conversion (Eerdewijk and Roggeband, 2014; MacRae and Weiner, 2017).

Feminist IR scholars have demonstrated that gender is of central importance to both the conception and practice of security (Tickner, 1992; Shepherd, 2008; Sylvester, 2010; Wibben, 2010). As Stern notes, the “workings of gender are deeply implicated in processes of militarisation, formulation of security policy and nationalist ideology” (Stern, 2011: 30). Language also becomes complicit in militarisation and is in and of itself deeply gendered (Cohn, 1987), this contributes to the reproduction of gendered power dynamics (Wright and Hurley, 2017). Military institutions therefore represent an “extreme case of the gendered organisation” (Carreiras, 2006: 40), with military activity tied both to male bodies and masculinity (Kronsell, 2015: 6; Goldstein, 2001: 34; Duncanson and Woodward 2015: 4). CSDP is no exception here, the reliance on member states to fill positions has resulted in the reproduction of “dominant norms and forms” in the shape of masculine bodies (Kronsell, 2015: 7).

As gender equality is mainstreamed outside the area of employment and social affairs, the very nature of the principle itself is reinterpreted to meet the operational needs of each policy area (see for instance, Anttila, 2014). The principle therefore becomes co-opted and is deployed strategically to fulfil the overall aims of the organisation rather than those of the actors championing it (Stratigaki, 2004). In the case of CSDP, measures aimed at improving the gender balance have been associated with increasing operational effectiveness and producing better outcomes (Council of the European Union, 2008; European Parliament, 2010). This reproduces a particular understanding of “gender” in the external sphere, which draws heavily on stereotypes and binaries, constituting “women as neoliberal subjects who are responsible for their own emancipation” and as a resource for military action (Muehlenhoff,

2017: 3). The instrumentalisation of women's bodies creates an expectation that women will embody the difference expected of them. This also serves to further gender CSDP, normalising the existing majority (men) and constructing them 'as homogenous and naturally associated with the organization' (Kronsell, 2012).

The highly masculine and hierarchical structure of CSDP help to explain the low levels of buy-in for gender mainstreaming. Security and defence is also a policy area which provides limited opportunities for civil society engagement given the sensitivities of the issues involved (Mayer, 2008). It is therefore evident that not only is CSDP something of a "special" policy area but that there are significant institutional obstacles to the emergence of feminist coalitions and networks within the field of security and defence.

Woodward (2003) provided one of the most comprehensive analyses of the institutional pathways for the inclusion of gender in European policy making. She argued that in order for gender to be included a feminist triangle has to take root. This feminist triangle provides a platform for feminist advocacy within organisations and with the support of institutional actors. The cornerstones of the triangle are: (1) Femocrats; (2) Organised civil society; (3) Epistemic communities. Woodward (2003) demonstrated how such a triangle supported the development of the European gender *acquis* in the field of employment. However, as different policy spheres have distinct gender regimes and institutional cultures, it remains to be seen if this approach is equally effective in areas that are traditionally seen as gender neutral. The idea put forward by Woodward (2003, 2015) is that these feminist partnerships are a strategic response to the marginality of gender equality policy (Holli, 2008). Woodward explores specifically the informal and personal relationship that underpin these relationships (Holli, 2008; Woodward, 2015). This idea has been subject of debate about the nature, structure, and effectiveness of these constellations. Holli (2008) warns about the limitations of focusing on a pre-established set of actors and assuming that the concept will travel easily between policy contexts. More

recently, Jacquot (2015) points out that recent developments in communitised policy areas ultimately point to the decline and dissolution of the feminist triangle. Woodward (2015) also acknowledges that the level of institutionalisation and bureaucratisation have ultimately weakened some of the original lynchpin of the feminist triangle. However, she also points out that ‘for those who care passionately about these issues, the problems still need to be addressed by actors from different places in the political world. The velvet passion for gender justice is still the appropriate glue, even if it is no longer a triangle being held in place’ (Woodward, 2015: 16). This conclusion seems all the more relevant in the case of a policy area which has historically resisted gender mainstreaming.

We draw on Woodward’s (2003, 2015) approach as a way to identify key institutional actors operating in the context of CSDP. Identifying the emergence, or absence, of feminist constellations within CSDP will help us to map this policy’s perceived “special status”, which limits opportunities for the mainstreaming of gender and equality norms. Woodward’s approach identifies key actors and processes that have historically operated in the context of highly communitised areas (i.e. employment and social affairs) to institutionalise the *gender acquis*.

The presence of feminist actors is the lynchpin in Woodward’s model, as they open a space for new progressive policy making to take place. Feminist actors, i.e. femocrats, working within institutional structures provide openings for the inclusion of gender in areas of “high politics”. They provide a space for advocacy groups and epistemic communities to inform the decision making process, and in so doing they allow gender norms to inform and shape the process (Eerdewijk and Roggeband, 2014: loc 1332). The approach assumes that the inclusion of gender within the policy portfolio and feminist actors within the decision-making process can change the nature of the institutional gender regime. The very nature of security poses a unique set of challenges for the emergence of feminist constellations. Despite the change

brought about by the Lisbon Treaty, security and defence remain largely intergovernmental. This means that governments play a much greater role in agenda setting and decisions are less open to public and civil society scrutiny. Epistemic communities from outside of EU institutions and agencies are also not welcome to engage in the policy process. This leaves femocrats within the institutions, the EEAS and the Commission in particular, to carry the burden for integrating gender.

What transpires from the analysis of feminist triangles in employment/social affairs is that they represent an instance of institutional layering rather than institutional conversion, which would have required the strategic use of “mainstreaming” as a policy tool to achieve a higher level of norm diffusion. CSDP is a policy area that is run on both “established” and “new” structures, particularly in respect to the EEAS. Despite the window of opportunity which opened with the creation of the EEAS in 2010, this process of development has yet to successfully integrate a gender perspective. The rest of this article will outline the development of CSDP to understand gender silences in this policy sphere and the opportunities for the emergence of feminist constellations in this area post-Lisbon.

Feminist Mapping of Common Security and Defence Policy

In order to understand the opportunities and constraints to the inclusion of gender in CSDP, it is important to explore its evolution, as well as institutional imperatives and silences. A gender sensitive analysis of the institutionalisation of CSDP draws attention to the norms that underpin the emergence of the EU as a security actor. Starting from the assumption that the very way security and defence are defined is gendered, this analysis will expose the inherent tension of transforming the EU into a gender sensitive defence actor. It also challenges the very assumption that “gender” is the sole prerogative of “softer” policy areas.

CSDP originated from the Franco-British St Malo declaration in 1998. Subsequent policy developments crystallised the division between the military (Helsinki Headline Goal) and civilian (Civilian Headline Goal) components in the overarching architecture of European security and defence policy, giving primacy to the military element. The military structures - e.g. the Political and Security Committee (PSC), The EU Military Committee (EUMC) and the EU Military Staff (EUMS) – were institutionalised first, with civilian expertise - i.e. the Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability - making an appearance only eight years later. These institutional complexities and the importance of ensuring consistency between civil and military instruments led to the creation of the EU External Action Service (EEAS) in 2010.

The point that we are making is that CSDP did not come out of nowhere, but is in part shaped by highly militarised norms that are uncondusive to gender mainstreaming. The Nordic countries' efforts to push the civilian element at its inception did not successfully challenge the deeply masculinised understanding of “hard” security prevalent at St Malo (Kronsell, 2015). This central normative underpinning has not been challenged despite the inclusion of the civilian aspect. It is not the scope of this article to articulate how this is gendered, however it has the long-term impact of shaping institutional hierarchies and the overarching scope of the policy itself. Considering the masculine nature of military structures and defences policies, it would have been easier for the EU to include gender norms in the development of CSDP if the civilian component had been given priority in the development of the policy and its supporting institutional structures.

Pre-Lisbon core documents outlining the EU's approach to security - i.e. the European Security Strategy (ESS) (2003) and the Report on the Implementation of the ESS (2008) - reflect a traditional understanding of defence and threat. There is a degree of dissonance between the EU's conceptualisation of “threat” and its “softer” approach to security, which lends the organisation to include protection and promotion of women's human rights as a key

objective. It is also worth noting that the inclusion of a humanitarian component with a strong focus on human rights did not mark a gendering of external relations. This is despite the fact that two of the core concepts within CSDP are the comprehensive approach and effective multilateralism with the UN at its core.

A couple of points are worth making here to contextualise the significance of gender silences in CSDP. Firstly, the Treaty of Amsterdam (1998) included the principle of gender mainstreaming, which should have been a platform for the diffusion of equality norms into all areas of EU activities, including external relations. Secondly, the UN Security Council ratified Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security in 2000. The introduction of this new global gender norm created a space for discussing the gendered nature of security. The fact that this was not transposed at the European level until 2008 is significant both from a normative and an institutional perspective. Looking at the documents that operationalise the overarching aims of CSDP provides important insights into norm diffusion from one policy sphere to another and the institutional obstacles to mainstreaming gender in external affairs.

It is easy to see how the division of competencies post-Lisbon has led to institutional competition between the EEAS and Commission (Smith, 2013: 1308) and, how this has led to institutional stovepiping of internal (area of freedom, security and justice) and external (CSDP) security issues (Shepherd, 2016). Ultimately, this resulted in ‘turf wars as institutions and committees fought to ensure their primacy in overlapping policy areas, creating a compartmentalised approach to security policy’ (Shepherd, 2016: 93). From a mainstream perspective, these dynamics are indicative of the EEAS’s struggle to find its place/position in the institutional hierarchy (Duke, 2014: 25). From a feminist institutionalist perspective, they ultimately point to the obstacles to the EU becoming an effective gender actor in external affairs. “Gender” as a policy issue becomes “stuck” between different areas and institutions, thus preventing the full integration of mainstreaming in CSDP.

A final area that needs to be considered is the make-up of the personnel working in this area. Considering the importance of feminist coalitions to facilitate the inclusion of a gender dimension to the policy process, this is a particularly important dimension that needs to be unpacked. The mainstream literature on European security institutions has underscored how the similarity in the background of those working in the EUMS and PSC has meant they are essentially epistemic communities (Davis, 2010; Howorth, 2012). When we consider ‘windows of opportunity’ for instilling new norms into an institution, it is clear that this relates to the overarching institution and will be more difficult in the military element.

What does this overview tell us in respect to the failure of CSDP to mainstream a gender perspective? There are several clues. The first relates to the idea of stovepiping (Shepherd, 2016). In other words, gender may have got stuck in the first pillar and within the Commission. Hence there has been no spillover of the gender dimension into the intergovernmental realm of CSDP. The second reflects the cultural element as underscored by the range of literature using this approach to analyse the PSC and EEAS. Socialisation implies that once a culture or *esprit de corps* has been formulated that any new member will be integrated into it (Juncos and Reynolds, 2007). The absence of an *esprit de corps* in the EEAS is therefore particularly interesting, as it opens windows for the introduction of new agendas, e.g. WPS. However, if femocrats are not present to push forward “gender issues” during the genesis of an institution then they will remain largely missing from the agenda.

Gendering CSDP: Institutional mechanisms, critical actors and feminist triangles

Understanding opportunities and constraints for the emergence of feminist triangles in CSDP provides important insights into how the foundational norms are transformed as they travel from core areas of policy, i.e. employment, to external relations. As concepts become folded into mainstream policy areas, they also run the risk of co-optation, particularly in the context

of ‘large organizations, like the EU institutions, where decisions are influenced by a large number of policy actors and processes’ (Stratigaki, 2004). When this happens, Stratigaki (2004: 32) warns, ‘the meanings of key concepts initially introduced by feminists and originally grounded in feminist ideas (...) were conceptually transformed by their subordination to different policy priorities, resulting in the loss of their potential for changing gender relations’. Co-optation has been fairly prominent in the area of employment, where equality has long been a tool for the achievement of “higher” economic priorities (Stratigaki, 2004).

Over the last seventeen years, a “global gender norm” has emerged in relation to international peace and security, and is of relevance to our discussion here. The adoption of UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) in 2000 was ground-breaking. It marked the first time the Security Council had discussed women, and civil society actors played a key role in ensuring the realisation of the resolution building on decades of feminist activism at the UN. UNSCR 1325 acknowledges the disproportionate impact of conflict on women, while also calling for their participation as actors in peacebuilding. The WPS agenda was subsequently reinforced by the adoption of seven follow-up resolutions which widened and deepened the agenda to include a focus on preventing sexual violence in conflict, and most recently countering violent extremism. The (necessary) compromises made at the Security Council in order to realise UNSCR 1325 and the follow-up resolutions mean that in many ways the WPS agenda raises as many question about the role of women and gender in conflict as it sought to address. This has also meant that WPS remains a contested concept, with a wide range of interpretations across different institutional settings.

The WPS agenda has been critiqued for its lack of provision on implementation, however this is also one of its strength allowing for the implementation of the agenda in a context relevant way, rather than as a top down imposition (McLeod, 2012: 145). This also leaves open the possibility that WPS can be co-opted to support instrumental initiatives, rather

than those supportive of wider change in institutional structure and practice with the goal of gender equality. The implementation of WPS is the responsibility of states, however, civil society continue to provide a key platform for holding governments to account for their implementation of their agenda, with WPS proving an important advocacy tool (Cohn, 2004). Regional actors, including the EU, NATO and AU have also committed to implementing the agenda. As a result, UNSCR 1325 can be understood as a ‘travelling concept’ with utility across a range of actors and settings, beyond that initially envisaged by the Security Council. The different meanings ascribed to WPS can be attributed to the existing concern with gender by each actor (McLeod, 2012: 137). This aids an understanding of the specific way in which the EU has understood the WPS agenda within a neoliberal framework (Guerrina and Wright, 2016; Muehlenhoff, 2017).

In the area of defence the rationality of “operational effectiveness” shapes, and constrains, policy choices. It is useful to explore how the very principle of gender equality is transformed when it “travels” from communitarised policy areas to intergovernmental ones, such as CSDP. Unlike NATO, the EU has yet to fully embrace the gender discourses as a strategy for public diplomacy in the external dimension (David and Guerrina, 2013; Wright, forthcoming). Where gender makes an appearance in this policy sphere it is treated as a second order issue, and marginalised accordingly. This speaks to both institutional culture, that is the reluctance to mainstream gender in these areas, as well as the absence of critical actors working within the broader institutional framework to advance the idea either as a normative ideal or a strategic tool (David and Guerrina, 2013; Guerrina and Wright, 2016; Kronsell, 2015).

The idea of feminist triangles provides a useful tool for understanding how “gender” was institutionalised in employment. It should therefore follow that the emergence of similar constellations in the context of CSDP is the marker for gender mainstreaming in security and defence. In this section we draw on Woodward’s triangle to reveal if feminist coalitions are

emerging in the area of security and defence, thus highlighting opportunities and constraints for the widening of the security agenda to include a gender sensitive approach, particularly in relation to the WPS agenda.

Institutional actors: where are the Femocrats?

The previous section outlined the institutional development of CSDP. The ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon created a window of opportunity for the deepening of the EU's role in security and defence, and thus it was supposed to be a critical juncture for the EU's position and role as a foreign policy actor. In particular, the creation of the EEAS, the main innovation of the Treaty, was supposed to facilitate the widening of the scope of this policy portfolio. Yet, seven years into this new regime, the transposition of the gender *acquis* is limited at best, focusing predominantly on the implementation of UNSCR 1325, which is a very small part of the overarching policy area of security and defence.

Another aspect of the EEAS, which had the potential to foster greater commitment to gender equality and gender mainstreaming, is leadership. The position of High Representative has been occupied by two women (Dame Catherine Ashton and Ms Federica Mogherini), which is in itself ground-breaking (Kronsell, 2015:7). This is not to say that they are by extension advocates for gender equality and/or seek to transform how security is framed at the European level, however it has symbolic importance. This becomes clear when looking at women's representation in the EEAS decision-making structures.

Interestingly, the issue of gender balance within the EEAS was initially raised by the European Parliament (EP) and in particular the Green Party. This occurred during the drafting of the Council document setting up the institution (European Parliament, 2013). As the European Parliament (2013:14) report on geographical and gender balance states, 'from this point forth the gender aspects were reflected more consistently in the discussions surrounding

the EEAS and the eventual passage of an amended version of the Council decision in July 2010'. Hence the EP identified the integration of gender balance as a key issue in the creation of the EEAS although it should be highlighted that hiring women does not automatically lead to the mainstreaming of gender in the area of security and defence.

This builds on the EP assuming a key role for promoting gender equality in all EU action/work. For example, the Parliament was quick to adopt its own resolution in support of the adoption of UNSCR 1325 (European Parliament, 2000). In addition, the FEMM Committee had also called for the creation of a high-level 'European Envoy for Women's Rights', in line with the UN Women recommendations of best practice recognised at NATO and the AU (European Parliament, 2009).¹ While the Parliament has evidently seized on the issue of gender and external relations, it has only advisory capacity over the inter-governmental area of security and defence and limited purchase over member states. Its role therefore remains advisory and it has little agency to ensure gender is mainstreamed in this area.

The actualisation of gender balance in the EEAS has proved to be problematic. For example, as Kronsell (2015:7) notes, while Ashton made some progress in supporting the increase in the representation of women in Head of Delegation role to 20%, this was not enough to reach the critical mass necessary to disrupt hegemonic norms and structures (Dahlerup, 1988; Kanter, 1977). Whilst there has been a slight increase in the number of women within the EEAS, they remain largely under-represented in decision-making roles. Moreover, female heads of delegations are concentrated in the Middle East and North Africa, Central Asia and the Caucasus (Novotná, 2015: 393). It is also worth noting that more women are recruited from EU Institutions, rather than member states. In addition, female diplomats are drawn from only

¹ The European Parliament's FEMM Committee is the core group within the EP which deals with women's rights and gender equality.

a very small pool of member states. Hence, the reliance on member states contribution to improve gender balance within the EEAS is a clear institutional limitation to the full realisation of gender mainstreaming (Novotná, 2015: 393). Efforts to support gender mainstreaming should focus on being both substantively and representationally inclusive.

The EEAS first appointed a gender advisor, Mara Marinaki, in autumn 2015. Sweden, a country which has pushed the gender dimension in other institutions such as NATO, was the driving force behind introducing the role (EU Official, 2015). Prior to this development, gender was incorporated into other areas of the EEAS. For example, there was one human rights and gender advisor within the Crisis Management Policy Directorate (CMPD) on secondment from Finland. She was responsible for the gender dimension in respect to strategic planning (EU Official, 2015). Whilst there was an understanding within the EEAS that having officials who dealt with gender was necessary, the issue was subsumed under the broad umbrella of human rights.

The introduction of a senior role specifically charged with mainstreaming gender in the work of the EEAS, is a significant development for the gendering of security and defence. However, there are three issues worth noting. Firstly, the gender advisor does not report directly to the HR. Instead the role is positioned as a support service for the Secretary General Helga Schmidt. Whilst this dilutes the importance of the role, Helga Schmitt has been championing the professional development of women in the EEAS (Duke, 2014). Hence this can provide a focal point for femocrats within the EEAS. Second, Marinaki's main role is to advise on the EU's compliance with the UN Women, Peace and Security framework. On one level, this is a welcome step appearing to position gender as a salient part of the core purpose of the EEAS. However, the position falls short of that recognised as best practice in the UN Women commissioned report on UNSCR 1325, which identified the position of Special Representative/Envoy at the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and the African

Union (AU) as examples of best practice (Coomaraswamy, 2015). Finally, the office has fairly limited resources, as it includes just two officials, a secretary and an administrative assistant. This points to a disconnect between the scope of the task and the number of people responsible for its implementation.

It is too early to assess the effectiveness of the role in full. However it is clear that although it provides a focus point and central voice for gender issues in different fora including in such areas as training, it is limited by the size of the office and where it sits within the institutional structure of the EEAS indicating lack of representation. Thus its main significance is symbolic. In this respect, the EU falls out of line with NATO, where the high-level Special Representative on Women, Peace and Security represents both symbolic commitment and is positioned to provide leadership within the organisation (Wright, 2016: 354). The opportunities for a Gender Advisor, rather than a Special Representative/Envoy to provide such leadership within the EEAS are limited, given the lack of seniority attached to the role and that it lacks a direct line of communication to the High Representative (Guerrina and Wright, 2016: 310). This undermines the ability of the EU to assume a role as a gender actor in external affairs.

Gendering civil society engagement with EU external affairs

The relationship between formal institutional actors, for example the EEAS gender advisor, and civil society organisations in the area of security is complex and is historically defined by asymmetrical power structures. Yet, in the area of Women, Peace and Security, civil society actors have played an important role in holding states to account for their implementation of the agenda (True, 2016: 312). This emerging global gender norm represents an additional way in which gender could be integrated into EU external relations, mapping onto the feminist constellations and providing an addition tool for civil society advocacy given the EU's stated commitment to WPS. It would therefore be expected that the EEAS efforts to introduce the

WPS at the European level would provide the focus for civil society's advocacy efforts in area of security and defence.

The European Women's Lobby (EWL) has proved to be a critical actor for supporting the mainstreaming of gender in EU policies, pushing for this integration beyond the original remit of equal pay to include all areas of social, political and economic life (Guerrina, 2005). It is the transnational feminist network that has had the most purchase on communitised areas of EU policies (Kantola, 2010; Lang, 2009). It could therefore be expected that this role would transpose to EU external relations and CSDP, particularly considering that its activity has included women's human rights advocacy in external affairs (Kantola, 2010: 95). However, this has not been the case and the EEAS and CSDP, and WPS, have remained outside of the EWL's remit (Guerrina and Wright, 2016: 300). This lack of engagement is in part a result of institutional structures, with the EWL funded by the European Commission but also because the EWL has been far less open to actively creating alliances (Lombardo and Verloo, 2009: 491). Hence it is necessary to look elsewhere to see whether there are other potential feminist civil society actors which have an interest in engaging with CSDP.

The WPS agenda has provided an advocacy tool for feminist activists, with civil society actors having a key role in holding the UN and national governments to account for their implementation of the WPS agenda (Kirby and Shepherd, 2016: 379). In relation to the EU, the locus for consistent engagement with civil society is focused on the Informal Task Force for the implementation of UNSCR 1325, established in 2009 (Council of the EU, 2008). Composed of staff working on gender equality and security issues drawn from the EEAS, Council Secretariat and Commission, the Informal Task Force was specifically tasked with 'increasing the inter-institutional coordination and promoting a coherent approach to gender-related issues' (European Union, 2014). Member states can also participate and civil society is occasionally consulted. The Informal Task Force could therefore provide one area for the

meeting of key institutional actors, femocrats and civil society for the realisation of a feminist triangle in external relations. However, there are a number of factors which have the potential to limit its efficacy. First, it is not clear if, or how often, the Task Force meets outside of their annual exchange on the national (not EU) level implementation of UNSCR 1325. Second, attendance by EU institutions varies greatly year on year and is far from consistent (Guerrina and Wright, 2016: 299). Third, the Informal Task Forces does not go as far as to formalise mechanisms for consultation with civil society actors on the *EU's* implementation of the WPS agenda. This is in contrast to NATO which has established a formal policy consultation mechanism with civil society actors (DCAF, 2014). The potential for this task force to play an embedded role in a feminist triangle appears to be under realised.

It is through the annual meeting of EU member states on UNSCR 1325 organised by the Informal Task Force that there is potential to sow the seeds to support the emergence of a feminist triangle. The meeting, first convened in 2009, brings together civil society, EU institutions and gender focal points, including from CSDP (EPLO, 2012). Civil society participation in these meetings is neither mandated, nor is there consistency in who attends. This limits the potential for a feminist triangle to emerge. Civil society participation, where it does occur, is led by the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO), rather than the European Women's Lobby (Guerrina and Wright, 2016). Indeed, it was the EPLO which facilitated the first civil society consultation on UNSCR 1325 with the Informal Task Force in March 2010 (EEAS, 2010). Thus, the EPLO has become the locus of civil society engagement with EU external relations in respect of WPS.

The EPLO is itself an umbrella organisation, composed of 37 NGOs, networks of NGOs and think tanks, drawn from 13 European countries (including 10 EU member states) (EPLO, 2016a). None of the member organisations are specifically feminist organisations, although a number do include gender within their remit of work, such as Saferworld (2016). The EPLO

does have a dedicated Working Group on Gender, Peace and Security, which works to ‘promote the inclusion of a meaningful gender perspective in EU policy, programming and implementation related to peace and security’ and to integrate a gender perspective into the EPLO’s work (EPLO, 2016c).

The EPLO has supported the implementation of the WPS agenda by the EU through evidence-based reports, policy recommendations and meetings. This has been done, in part, through the Civil Society Dialogue Network (CSDN), a mechanism for consultation between the EU and civil society. The initiative is jointly funded by the EU (Instrument for Stability²) and the EPLO, with the latter running it in conjunction with the European Commission and EEAS. A key function of the CSDN has been the integration of a gender perspective and WPS (EPLO, 2016b).

Understanding the institutional mechanisms is key here. The Instrument for Stability comes primarily under the responsibility of the Commission, and is applicable only to the civilian aspect of CSDP. The efficacy of organised civil society is therefore limited. This leaves the military dimension out of the scope of the CSDN and removes this aspect of civil society scrutiny of the implementation of UNSCR 1325 at the European level. Hence, it is easy to see how gender becomes trapped and excluded from CSDP. While UNSCR 1325 has been integrated within the EU’s external action, the extent to which civil society can engage with its implementation within CSDP is limited. This is predominantly as a result of the exclusion of the military dimension from the CSDN. The complex division of competencies between the Commission, the EEAS and the Member States curtail the ability of institutional actors to assert agency and for civil society to engage effectively and comprehensively.

² The Instrument for Stability (IfS) was replaced in March 2014 by the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP).

Conclusion

The analysis presented here highlights the weakness of the feminist triangle model for achieving institutional change outside communitarised areas. As both WPS and feminist triangles “travel” between institutions and organisations, the way actors operate, interpret and operationalise the concepts highlights institutional biases and structures. The analysis of feminist constellations and actors allows us to understand the diffusion of gender norms in the field of external affairs. The analysis of security and defence points specifically to the critical role of femocrats in ensuring that issue enters the policy agenda. Although relying too heavily on institutional actors is likely to lead to co-optation, as outlined by Stratigaki (2004), they are the ones with detailed knowledge of institutional structures and culture, which is required for mainstreaming. Our analysis points to the absence of feminist voices within the EEAS which itself is lacking an overarching *esprit de corps*. For this reason they have been slow to take up the mantle of the Women, Peace and Security agenda. It is too soon to make any meaningful comment about the efficacy of the office of the Gender Advisor as a women’s policy agency at the heart of EEAS. Moreover, the fractured nature of European civil society, which largely works within policy silos, prevents cross-fertilisation and coalition building. The EPLO is active in the area of Women, Peace and Security, but does not appear to have been as effective as the EWL in the area of employment.

One of the key conclusions relates to which framework is best suited for a comparative analysis of gender mainstreaming in CSDP. The article, although conscious of the heterogeneous nature of the EU as an organisation, ultimately started from the position that the EU is a gender actor because of its role in communitarised areas. Treaty commitment to equality and gender mainstreaming provides a platform for a detailed discussion of how the EU, and its constituent parts, adhere to core principles. What this analysis highlights, is the unique position and nature of security and defence within the process of European integration.

Perhaps NATO provides a more suitable comparator than communitarised policy areas. Equally, our analysis highlights the level of institutional resistance to changing the way security is framed. This conclusion ultimately has significant implications for arguments that the EU's most effective strategy in external affairs is a normative one.

What is clear is that CSDP is deemed to be different from other areas. The highly intergovernmental nature of decision making in this area shapes the way states and institutions act. As a result CSDP has been exceptionalised, which means that we need to develop a new framework for understanding how gender can be mainstreamed or included. Despite clear limitations, it is interesting to note that so far the main pathway for the inclusion of gender in CSDP has been through UNSCR 1325.

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